

NECC



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PARNASSUS

spring
2003



PARNASSUS SPRING 2003

Inter-Arts Magazine
of Northern Essex Community College

**Parnassus is the name of the
mythological mountain home of
the nine muses who inspired
humankind in the arts.**

The policy of the editorial staff has been to select material for the magazine democratically

We have read each work submitted and viewed all artwork.

We voted to determine eligibility: a majority vote for a piece meant publication.

Parnassus provides an opportunity for new artists and writers to reach others;
it's a showcase of Northern Essex Community College student creativity.

PARNASSUS PROFILE

Amy Girard, a visual arts major here at NECC, returns as the Parnassus Cover Artist.

The front cover is a self-portrait. She wanted to do a unique portrait, and after taking several shots, the close up of her eye was her favorite. She feels that "the eye alone can show so much expression." Amy modestly explains further, "What surprised me most about my photos is how proud I am of them." In the future, Amy plans to earn a BFA and an MFA with a concentration in photography.

She will graduate from NECC in 2004.



John Zarse

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the JACKET

by Mela Strangie-Brown

She could detect the scent of cloves and tobacco in the jacket she wore, though she did not smoke. It wasn't her jacket, but she'd known that when she'd put it on. The leather thing she wore, beat up from many years of use, was only slightly too big for her, which made her smirk.

"Either I'm too fat or he's too thin," she muttered, pulling the coat tighter around her. It was true, he was slight of frame - now that she reflected upon it. He was only two inches taller than she, and though he was muscular he was very slim. Lithe and agile, he'd called it, which accounted for the size of the jacket.

Her attention was not on the events that had occurred earlier that night, the events that would explain where and why Anthony had let her borrow the article, but instead on the jacket itself. It was a black waistcoat, somewhat worn at the sleeves. Its pockets held an empty package of clove cigarettes, which accounted for the smell. She'd tried that once - smoking, that is - and had hated it. She couldn't understand why Anthony had ever gotten addicted to those ammonia-soaked death sticks in the first place.

The lining was torn where there should have been an inner breast pocket. She knew that not because she'd done it - torn it, that is - but because there was that empty cigarette carton pressing against her breast, alerting her of its presence. Yes, she'd ripped that damned hole in the inside pocket, allowing him to hide his cancer sticks

from his mother. He'd asked her to, after all. That had been three years ago, and he'd never gotten it fixed. Sentimental value, he said it had. She guessed it was because neither of them had the extra money for a trip to the tailor's.

She also identified another scent on the leather. It was the scent of his cologne. She wrinkled her brow a moment, trying to remember what the brand was, but could not. Then it hit her. Hillfigure. Of course. She should have known. He'd been wearing the same brand of cologne since junior-high! Why should she not recognize it?

Because she hated it.

Yes, that had something to do with it, but it was certainly not all. She did not want to remember the little things about him. He'd hurt her, and she'd sooner slice off her fingers, individually, with plastic sporks than let him know. About the only reason she still wore the damn thing was because her own coat had been lost ... somewhere.

She sighed, for what felt like the umpteenth-millionth time that night, and ran a hand through her hair. She should go home. She should return the jacket. She should be doing quite a lot of different things, but nothing seemed to reach her. She just kept walking, wishing she'd never...

It made no difference, now. She knew the truth, and with this knowledge she would guard her heart from future aches and pains. She would protect herself from Anthony, who would surely try to find her and persuade her to come home. He would find her the way he always did, most likely because he had the car and she was on foot, and he would drive beside the sidewalk until she would just look at him, half-smile, and get in. The two would drive in silence with him smoking those terrible cigarettes, and her wondering what had happened to her backbone.

She was about to cross the street when a pair of all-to-familiar headlights blinded her. The beat-up SUV pulled onto the curb, and the driver's side window rolled down. Curly, chestnut hair, soft tanned skin and violently green eyes stared out at her. He cracked that painfully handsome smile, the one that made those emeralds he called eyes crinkle in the corners, and gestured for her to get in.

"It's getting cold out," he commented. She raised her eyebrows at him, sighed, and climbed in. And our story would begin all over again, in three days or so.

The End.



Andre Hester

TEACHERS

by Joshua Therrien

They are all too often
Unappreciated and
Seen as the army
Inside the Trojan horse.

Probed by skepticism
They lie in wait
For the unsuspecting
Vulnerable Spartans.

In hindsight I realize
They show what is best,
Point out the North Star
And cast a sailing wind.

Like Athena guided Odysseus,
They use their power
To help us find our way
And restore our Hope.

With foresight I realize
They are loyal advisors
Whose wisdom and insight
Are for us to benefit from.

They are everyday people,
With everyday aspirations,
Everyday plans
And everyday interests.

Another's appreciation
Has a deceptive appearance
But will show its true self
When everything is taken in.

For those out there
Don't lose heart.
The longer journey is
Rewarded greater treasures.



Natalie Russo

A DIFFERENT ENDING

by Joshua Therrien

Prince charming never comes.
Dreams don't come true.
No storybook outcome
To bring this tale to a close.

Evil triumphs over goodness.
Cackles echo in the darkness.
The bitter taste of an apple
Sits forever on sleeping lips.

No valiant knights in rescue.
No fairy godmother to help.
A coin thrown in the well
But wishes remain un-granted.

No magical spells to cast.
No innocent kisses that save.
The land turns gray while
The castle grows dark.

Christina Eldridge



rain isn't rain,
to me
unless it is in torrents
and soaks to the bone.
the same might be said of night,
in black thick layers without
nightclouds sliding across the moon.

ON WATER AS LOVE

by Emily J. Dignan

i like my clouds, also,
the kind that sweep the sky and twist like wisps
of smoke: large
+ billowing like a blanket for
the birds.

a simpler cloud might be the
kind others settle for,
shadowing overhead relentless,
gloomy and unavoidable. i ignore
these clouds, for they will not bother you
unless you let them.

i found my own rainstorm one night
while slipping on wet grass (where
i least expected to find it). i fell and
the dew soaked
into my clothing and i recall i felt
new
like you do
after being caught
in a thundershower.

i thought about being immersed
forever + i thought so hard that
i didn't dare to move. the mud settled
in around me and i stayed night after night
in my peaceful swoon.

i have yet to awaken from this
terrible, beautiful dream. it rains
all the time and i feel completely alive and
soaking wet. but there are no sad little clouds
to follow me around anymore. i left them
in the place where i was before,
in my awakened state.

if tomorrow you find me awake and
attentive and defeated, please do not be
sad. allow me to retreat +
allow me to forget. just wait for
the next storm
and walk towards the thunder.
and let the lightning
strike at you
and fill yourself up
with rain.

Always the science of success.
And this evening,
and her mood has not reached
the feel of a sunless downpour, yet.
These crying fits in the hands of a demigod.
This weeping with the feel of a delirious
doldrum hanging over her head.
And so she faced a dilemma.
And was held back by the ache of fear.
The chess and checkers cat took a few tongues, then.
So it was. So it be.
And then there was the empty and immense remembering.
All together in the endeavor to
tread water in the winter dreams of man.
...
Always...
The flow of cold surrender in these veins of the old machine.

MISCREANT DREAMS = DREAMS OF YOU



Eric Hayes

EXPOSE EVERYTHING

by Erin Mulcahy

Life can sometimes completely mess with your mind
It can beat the shit out of you,
And then force you to show your bruised body the next
morning
Even if you hide the bruises
Soon someone will see them
And expose everything that you are.



Jen Lena

parnassus spring 2003



Amy Girard

by Kate Zarnay

Here she lies, less than lilies –
–shaking in her own pale skin.
Pulsate through her
Livelier than her blood
Redder than her tears.
Drip. Dropped.
She is wrestled to the floor
By inner demons.
Wounds of words – spattered –
From fiery lips, course through
And corrode her veins.
Choke on your own indecision, again, girl.
Volume raises her nerves.
Gaping holes fill with blood.
The bullets have torn through her back.
Twist the knife. It won't be felt.
Too numb from the constant inconsistencies [of love].
The tongue of the snake vibrates,
As that lie filled love is breathed upon burning ears.

Innocence is nonsense.

She wrings her hands together.
Damn these tears.
Her hair hits against her pale profile
As she shakes her head violently
[almost in an attempt to purge out memories].

She is a perfect vision of loss.
Empty and full.
Of contradiction.
Affliction.
And addiction.

by Kate Zarnay

Unrequited - no.

Unresolved - perhaps.

And she should - melt those ice arms.

The ones "shes" [just like her] have frozen.

And how do you bend

What has already broken.

Because there are no boundaries.

The truths have been spilled

Like guts on barstools.

And fears undertake you with the

overtaking of words penned

feverishly on blank canvases. Covering
over previous graffiti.

How can purity be found in the

Most evil of places.

How does he manage to peel

back another layer of your lie-filled
onion life – by simply turning a page.

Oh. So it unfolds. And unravels.

Yet. How is it. We are still so

Tightly bound.

She attempts to hold the upper hand

by refusing to avert her eyes from
the orbs which have scorched holes
through her every alibi.

And he'll turn away. And she sighs

With relief. He never saw her eyes

Shaking. She can still appear in the lead.

But she's only one step ahead.

And too far behind.



Jeannie Dunnigan

by Leanne Morse

But do I hate what she is,
Or do I want to be her?
And don't we love something fresh,
Anything new,
A virgin,
Something that reminds us that time's not turning...

Oh will she ever wake up?
The stars are shining tonight,
Don't say it's not too late,
She's already gone, she was never right

Sweet girl, they never wanted you,
She's heading out the entrance door...
She has something she's looking for.

A memory of time flashed by in her eyes,
She laughs and sings to herself.
Can it be that only one moment,
Could tear her apart so easily?
You slap her arm and look for the right spot,
I could never understand how she could sleep through this...
The most important time of her life.

REMNANTS REMEMBERED

by Jillian Harlow

Forever beyond my
trembling grasp,

the memory echoes
in my mind.
just a glimpse,

in that little cafe
on Main Street.

His hand,
clasped around
a white,
paper,
coffee cup.



Jeffrey Coughlin



IGNORANCE

by James LaRocque
Inspired by The World, my mentor and playground

How did we ever get the notion
That we are all alone in this commotion?
When did our hopes for unity become outdated?
Have all our dreams simply faded?

When will we at last abandon our ignorant ways?
We still hate people because of their race,
And if we ever get over that what will take its place?
Who will finally stand up and end this rat-race?

Aren't you all a part of the same world?
Or apart from it as you must have been told?
We all came from the Earth and live on its face,
We are all a unique aspect of the same human race.

To hate somebody because they are different from you is just silly,
It's like hating a person because your name is John and his is Billy.
Do you fight with somebody because they have something you can't?
Because if you do that's just plain ignorant.

It's "politically incorrect" to raise the issue of racism, it's taboo,
This holds the same for every other'ism you can think of too.
Do you think that ignoring the fact it exists will make it go away?
If we ignore the darkness of night, does that mean it's day?

"I'm not ignorant," is what I hear people say,
But you don't stop other people from doing it, is that really ok?
Your passive choice has made you a pawn to the game,
Ignoring the problem and being a part of it is one in the same!

"But I'm just one person, what can I do?
This problem feels so much bigger than just me and you."
Knowledge is infectious as I'm sure you well know,
So share this poem with people wherever you go.

by Bryan Kelley

Mystical colors dance in the sky
On the shoulder of horses they ride by.
Light of the day fades on to others,
As the soothing warmth on your skin disappears.
Alive is what happens to your deep darkest fears.
Slippery shapes slide into shady spaces
Faint ghostly glow from the east arrives
Night walkers emerge
As the Clydesdales fade out of sight
I slip into bed and turn out the light.



Christina Eldridge

Two August days ago, on a farm in New York,
music played. I danced, I moshed from here to there, wearing

my golden mustard boots laced ankle high, virgins,
fresh out of the box, clean and dry.

My white socks cuffed and rolled down
to the tongue of my boots, pegged

with ivory legs unsoiled and milky,
coconut oiled, smooth and silky, just two days ago,

on fertile land shaded of many greens, stretched
over hills that met the still blue skies, until

yesterday, rains fell hour after hour.
Muddy waters flowed, forming pools and puddles.

Brown yuck splashed my legs,
drowned my boots and socks as I

plodded through it all, slipping and sliding,
trying not to fall, all day yesterday.

Today the sun showed its fiery face, perservering,
drying and swallowing up the wetlands.

Found a hot spot on higher ground
atop a small hill, closer to the sun.

I looked down at my boots, they looked up at me
with stiff tongues and firm laces,

thickly covered in muddy gook,
layer upon layer of hardened remnants.

My socks, concrete a perfect match with my boots,
meshed together, today they are one.

My legs, walking sticks, weathered memories,
harsh and rigid. True survivors.

Below me, barren farmland, a tossed brown and green slaw,
now lies flat and lifeless.

Haven't seen my feet in days. So tired,
so achey, singing the "I wanna go home" blues.

I snapped a shot, a true Kodak moment, then
turned and slowly scuffled away.

Six hours of driving til I reach home sweet
scented soap and a long hot shower.

But not until then, not a minute sooner
will I clean or remove these precious memories.



Paula Frew - Jackson Falls, Jackson, NH

ON

DRIVING

driving north,
the highway is striped with bleached gray
and wet black, sand sprinkled.
cold and blinding sun on white
with snowflakes whirling around small
and lost
like dandelion seeds from a faraway
plant.
the trees lean over, eager
to uproot and follow the flow of progress north.
they must be curious about where
the cars always go,
that whip by them noiselessly day and night.
they are dark green with their needles and spread
with white frosting, and the older ones rusty
and red like the sands of an exotic desert. the snow
paints them all every few days and they
all look like birch,
but today the white had washed away and the colors
bled through.

NORTH

by Emily J. Dignan

driving north, today
i faced forward eagerly as if i would
see my destination through the skyline.
as a human i like the feeling of making progress.
i zip past other cars on highways, i press my foot
harder on the gas, satisfyingly.
i like to have destinations. i paint them in the different
colors of success and arrange them
alphabetically, or chronologically, in the order which
they will be achieved.
i have been taught to see the world like this:
to separate each experience into steps that lead me
to one final destination.
i've been taught to live my life
as if always on a highway
speeding towards the light.

but driving north, today
i saw that
in all their artistic beauty the trees
were laughing at me
in my car as i -sped by importantly,
they recognize me as a sister
who has disowned her family.
we ignore the trees that laugh
and watch us, steadfast and wise.
but when the highway ends and
our engines burn out,
we'll join them in the ground. roots
planted
branches swaying
watching others scurry around
attempting in vain
to avoid this fate.



ELEGY FOR MY BROTHER

by Liz Burns

On the darkest morning
of my life,
My eyes seared holes
into the stranger
we call Daddy.

His words,
like ravaged animals
leapt at me,
as he gnashed his teeth
in an attempt to
convey your ending.

Fine lines of pain
like paper cuts
chased away the
impending rainfall,
as stone begot my stare.

Red, rusted chariot
awaiting.
Dragging me off
to battle, as my
weapons turn to smoke
that fills in the spaces
you left behind.

Tearing through gravel
the stranger drives on,
like a blind man
never noticing the view.

Despair unfurls from
the muffler,
as we approach
the door that never
leads home again.

Strong, young limbs
lay dormant, rigid, pale --
like fossils or petrified wood
in a forest
thick with nightmares.

Blackened blood
caked upon the face
of a cherubic boy,
no flash of
the smirk that held my heart,
held my hand.

No cohort on
the nights when
tar appears translucent,
compared to this view.

Just my baby
brother,
reduced to rubble-
his sister,
like the smooth stones
of oceans past-
erodes.



Julie Garbati

SUMMERTIME MEMORIES, LIFETIME DREAMS

Anonymous

On summer eves, after long hot days, undercountless stars,
daddy always sat outside in the yard on a reclining chair,
head back, feet up.

A cold drink within reach, soothing and refreshing
to his fiery lips, while anticipating a breeze
would chase the sweat from his brow.

In a nearby field, over grown with thick brush,
snagged of wind-swept litter, a songfest of crickets
could be heard chirping but never seen and
fireflies would flash silently like tiny lighthouses, signaling.

My dad, a man full of dreams, empty pockets
and years of endless hopes, would share
his plans of a better life.

I'd listen. I'd smile. I'd nod my head in agreement,
reassuring his role as a father,

Secretly, deep inside I doubted his word.

Some nights
a light wind pushed aside the persistent heat,
cooling the summer fire, cradling daddy to sleep,
leaving me alone with distant dreams
and a night of memories.

I'd sit along side him, still,
like the night, quiet like a kept secret,
letting him rest his labored body.

Later,
I'd gently tap his hand, and whisper,
"Daddy, let's go inside, it's late."
Slowly he'd get up without saying a word
and we'd head inside with me as his shadow,
always and forever.



Paula Frew - Rockport Dinghys



AFTERWARDS

by Emily J. Dignan

I remember the cloud of
molecules forming afterwards.
I lay there drinking silence dumbly,
numbly thrown over us in
the aftermath of gasping
grasping sweat.

I pondered the tired smile
which I felt, pulling my lips.
I felt also you panting
catching your breath,
sucked from satisfied air.
But I did not look. Instead
I simply lay there.

After the cloud's sensuous drops
dissolved and displaced themselves somewhat, it felt time
to turn and reassure myself
with the confirming contact of your eyes.
I tried it, and my gaze met the lines
of your back, cold and closed.

Hearing me stir, up you sat. Shut off
and inanimate. In the dark,
you flipped the light switch
which in turn fit your back, unsympathetic.
The light scattered the cloud;
you left the room.
I shivered deeper into covers,
newly naked and ashamed in the light,
realizing now how small I was
for such a large bed.



PARALYZED

by Kelleigh A. Michaud

Wounded.

Paralyzed from the neck down,
Dragged in by a cat.

I know what it's like to be paralyzed,
To have a bodily reaction to trauma.

To shut down.

Biting at her front limbs,
She caused them to bleed.

It was probably the only way
She knew how to cope
With what had happened to her.

I know what that's like, too.

Sweet potatoes and peanut butter,
Fed to her as you held her.

What a lucky squirrel,
To have you as her mother.

I needed someone like you
When I was wounded.

Traumatized.

Paralyzed.

Dragged in by a cat.



by Kate Zarnay

Do not chase her.

She'll always be two steps ahead,
And three steps behind.

Do not wait for her to take you away.
She's unsure of the direction

She'll lead you only in circles. And
Drop you back off at the place you had
Hoped to leave behind.

She can't be your escape
If she is still incarcerated
By her own free will.

My name is Jake, Jake Solomon. I am a student at the local community college. I decided to continue my education after previous failed attempts ten years ago when I was fresh from high school. I am currently majoring in liberal arts. Not because I am indecisive, but because I could never be satisfied with any one thing. College is a restaurant. The class schedules are menus. There is such a variety of knowledge that I don't want to limit myself. After I came back I found my college career to be more adventurous than I had imagined.

One morning, after listening to a lecture from one of my professors, the class was emptying out into the hallway when two men in suits came in with badges and dirty looks. They were detectives. You could tell from their utter lack of taste in clothes. They looked as though they frequently shopped at a thrift store owned by a retired cop. Everything about them was second hand, even their dirty looks. Bums with badges it seemed. Not the type of detective you would be proud to have protecting your rights. And to my astonishment one of them spoke. Up to this point I thought they were just mannequins waiting to be set in a window display. "Are you, Professor Douglas Demure?"

The professor answered, "Yes, that's me."

"You're coming with us!"

I don't know what went through my mind when I heard this, but I knew it was wrong and I had to do something. I jumped up from my metal desk and threw in my objections.

"What's going on here?!"

"Who are you?" said the second detective.

I replied defiantly, "I am this man's attorney. What's going on here, detective?!"

"The professor is a suspect in a homicide."

I could tell by the declining expression on the professor's face that this accusation was beyond his comprehension. I swear he almost fell over. All he

had to do was start babbling or drooling or twitching and any juror would find him innocent by way of temporary insanity; he already had my vote. It wouldn't come to that, I wouldn't let it. He was just stuck in place like an old record player. I gave him a shake to get his tune back on track. Conversation with him here on out was going to be difficult. With the classroom emptied I started to topple their case. "I am sure you have the wrong man. I know the professor well, and I know it isn't in him to hurt another human being. Just look at him!" He was still a quivering mess when I pointed to him. I could tell the detectives had objections, but I continued. "Not even in the farthest, wildest reaches of my imagination would I think that he is capable of anything like this." That was perhaps a lie. In the farthest reaches of my imagination, anything was possible. I could in fact conceive this accusation as a possibility, but I was going to keep that my little secret. "Whom is he supposed to have murdered?"

"We found this girl in the woods. She was strangled."

He showed the picture to us. The picture was only of her shoulders and face. She was an attractive girl with shoulder length blond hair and vacant blue eyes. There were marks on her neck made from the scarf that she was wearing. Her skin was pale, as would be expected, and her cheeks were sunk in a little. I guessed she had been there two days before they found her. She looked eerie. This was certainly a picture no one would forget.

"What makes you think he committed this crime?" I asked.

He answered, "According to the registrar's office she is in one of his classes."

"I'm sure his isn't the only class she was in!" I retorted.

"We also have witnesses that saw them leave the school together," the detective said.

The professor must have calmed down by now because he responded to their statement.

"She asked for a ride home. I was reluctant but she said she was desperate."

The detective replied, "Her family says she never made it home. Where were you that night?"

"I dropped her off and went home to correct some papers," the professor attested.

"Can anyone prove that?" asked the detective.

"No, I was alone. My wife has gone to visit her mother in the hospital."

The detective started getting on the professor. "So you figured this would be a good time to have an affair! When things didn't go your way you strangled her and dumped her in the woods!"

"No! No! It wasn't me!" the professor cried.

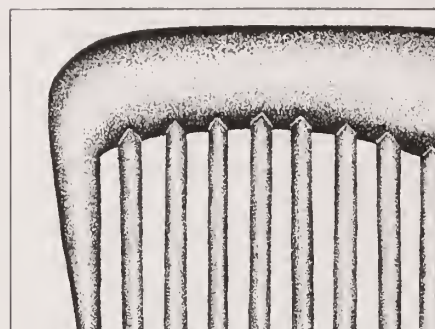
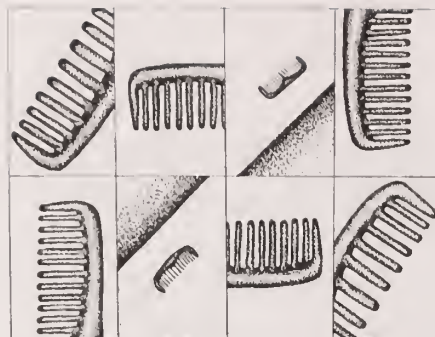
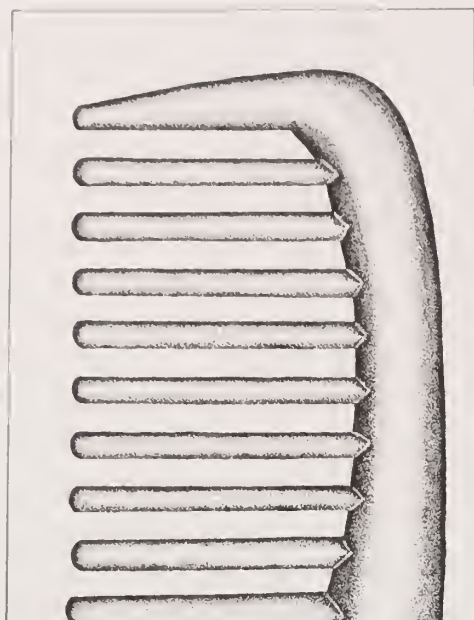
"I think this is getting out of hand," I interrupted. "Let me see the evidence you have."

The detective said that the girl had skin and blood under her fingernails from the struggle and the murderer would probably have marks on him. After the professor showed that he was absent of any of that type of mark the detective continued. He said the blood type found under her nails matched the blood type of the professor.

"If that's all you have you had better pack up and go home!" I protested. "There are plenty of other people who could have the same blood type as he even if it is a rare blood type! Obviously someone waited for the right moment to commit this crime to avoid suspicion. I think her attacker damaged her car hoping to get a chance to harm her in the parking lot. Anyone with a mediocre knowledge of cars could have disabled it. When the professor agreed to give her a ride home the attacker found this to be the perfect

opportunity to take the heat off of himself knowing that everything would point to the professor. Why don't you return after you have done some real police work and you find out who really did this crime!?"

The detectives left feeling they had less to go on then when they came in. The professor was relieved slightly but still worried. He must not have slept well over the next few days because he was starting to get as pale as if death were following him around. The detectives returned after that wearing the same second hand clothes and the same second hand dirty looks. They had found the person responsible for the girl's murder and brought him to jail. They were surprised when the person confessed to having done exactly what I said had happened. He had taken her distributor cap to make it seem like the car didn't work and followed the professor when he dropped her off. The man grabbed her outside her home and took her away. They came to apologize to the professor for causing him so much worry and disrupting his life like that. I could see that the professor felt easier. His great weight had been lifted. As they were leaving one of the detectives said one last thing to me, "By the way Mr. Solomon, we know you're not a lawyer."



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